

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on September 20, 2005 ("Office Action") rejected Claims 1, 4-6, 8, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §101 as claiming the same invention as that of Claims 9-14 of U.S. Patent No. 6,581,096. In responding to this rejection, applicants have canceled Claims 1, 4-6, 8, and 9.

Meanwhile, the Office Action allowed Claims 2-3, 7, and 10-28. Because Claims 2-3 and 7 were in dependent form, applicants have amended Claims 2-3 and 7 to put them into independent claim format.

Consequently, the remaining claims in the patent application are in condition for allowance and passage of this application to issue at an early date is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or comments concerning this application, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned attorney at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service in a sealed envelope as first class mail with postage thereon fully prepaid and addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the below date.

Date:

January 17, 2006

Patricia Gubbe

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